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Sins of the Father: Unravelling Moral Authority in the Irish Catholic Church

Susie Donnelly¹

Abstract

It was not until the mid-1990s that the extent of child abuse within the Irish Catholic Church began to be investigated and reported by the Irish media, yet why did it take so long for these scandals to emerge? This article analyses how the Irish media investigated and reported on the Irish Catholic Church from a socio historical perspective. Drawing from Bourdieu, analytical concepts of habitus, capital and field are employed to examine transformations in journalistic practice. By doing so, this article explores the symbolic power of the clergy in Catholic society and traces the erosion of their moral authority. The Bishop Eamonn Casey paternity scandal is analysed as a means of unpacking journalistic practice in the early 1990s; on the cusp of the widespread emergence of child sex abuse reports in the mainstream media. The case study builds from a series of semi-structured interviews with journalists who reported on clerical scandals, including religious affairs correspondents from the 1960s to present, and produces insight into the practices, perceptions and dispositions (habitus) of journalists over time. It is argued that the reporting of paternity scandals in the early 1990s reflects wider processes of social change taking place within the journalistic field and the religious field. While focusing on these specific fields as sites of inquiry, this study reveals the erosion of social and cultural barriers which finally led to the widespread reporting of clerical child abuse scandals in Ireland.

Introduction¹

The discovery of the bodies of 798 children in an unmarked grave at the Bon Secours Mother-and-baby home in County Galway is the most recent in a litany of scandals involving the Catholic Church in Ireland (McNamara 2014). Indeed over the past twenty years child abuse and the Catholic Church have become inexorably linked within Western popular culture. In the case of Ireland, the prevalence of child abuse historically has been well-documented and can be traced throughout the twentieth century (Murphy 2009, Ryan 2009, Murphy 2010). However it was not until the mid-1990s that child abuse scandals broke in mainstream Irish media and began to attract international attention (Donnelly and Inglis

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2010). Scholars internationally have begun to recognise the role of the media in the emergence of clerical and institutional abuse (Lichter, Admundson et al. 1993, Breen 1997, Kenny 1997, 2000, Inglis 2000, Goode, Mc Gee et al. 2003, 2004, O' Keeffe and Breen 2007, 2008, Kane 2008, 2009, Conway 2014). More recently, Keenan (2012) has provided greater insight into the institutional context from which clerical child abuse was enacted in Ireland and in the process explores response patterns of the diocesan hierarchy and their "learning curve" following increased pressure from the media (Keenan 2012: 206-9). Research presented in this article focuses on the Bishop Casey case study in order to analyse the interaction between journalistic and religious fields. In doing so it attempts to outline the socio historical context from which clerical scandals were reported in order to; understand how and why these scandals emerged; and the extent to which they reflect wider social and cultural change. It is argued that prior to the reporting of clerical child abuse scandals, a number of scandals revealing that high-profile clerics such as Bishop Eamonn Casey and Fr Michael Cleary had fathered children, reflected a social climate in which the moral authority of the Church and clergy began to be out rightly and directly challenged. It is these paternity scandals which demonstrate a shift in the how the media reported on the Church. They illustrate how journalists questioned and challenge the moral authority of clerics as never before.

Throughout the early twentieth century, the Catholic Church developed a close alliance with the State and influence among political leaders (Whyte 1980, Keogh 1994, Girvin 2008). The Church provided a moral infrastructure to a newly independent Ireland and clerics were afforded a dominant position as moral guardians of the Irish people which extended beyond the religious field to various social fields such as education, health and welfare (Inglis 1998, 2000). Indeed, the symbolic dominance of the Church also extended to the media field. Up until the late 1960s, there was strict censorship of television, film and publications in operation (Horgan 2001, Rockett 2004) and judgement was largely based on the assumption of infallibility, as 'Pre-Vatican II Catholic Ireland saw the Church as the authoritative custodian of moral truth and as such, tolerance of error was unjustifiable' (Woodman 1985: 129). Figures such as Archbishop John Charles McQuaid were central to operating and maintaining this moral authority, particularly through limiting and controlling the media field (Cooney 1999, Carty 2007, Donnelly and Inglis 2010). However from the 1960s, the Church's position was increasingly challenged within the context of significant liberalising social and cultural processes such as, the Second Vatican Council (Cooney 1974); the

relaxing of censorship laws (Murphy 1984, Woodman 1985); the feminist movement and “cultural wars” of the 1970s and 1980s (Kenny 1997, Girvin 2008, Ferriter 2009). Thus transformations in the media field and the investigation and reporting of clerical scandals, are considered as part of a wider process of modernisation and secularisation within Irish society.

The emergence of paternity scandals in the Irish media during the early 1990s exposed the private lives of clerics and instigated a process of questioning the moral authority of individuals traditionally placed on a pedestal. This reflects a wider shift in public opinion, as Lynch contends: ‘It was only through the 1990s that a significant shift in public opinion took place in which the moral authority of the Irish Catholic nation, and its institutional elites, came under serious challenge, as concern grew about the abuse of children’ (2012: 80). Arguably paternity scandals represent a precursor to this shift in public opinion. Through the media, the details of the home life, sex life and even sexual habits of clerics such as Bishop Casey were revealed by the women with whom they had fathered children (Murphy and de Rosa 1993, Hamilton and Williams 1995). These scandals demystified the clergy as sacred symbols and weakened their morally authoritative position. As one Catholic mother stated, the Casey saga ‘...lowered the priests down to nothing’ (Mrs McDonald 8:246 quoted in Hilliard 2003). Paternity scandals eroded the fear and reverence held for members of the clergy as Irish Catholics struggled to resolve the moral hypocrisy these cases posed. In turn journalists, particularly investigative journalists, were increasingly pro-active in investigating the Church, leading to a number of prominent exposes of institutional child abuse (Moore 1995, Raftery 1999, Raftery 2002), and later non-statutory inquiries (Murphy 2009, Ryan 2009, Murphy 2010). As former editor of *The Irish Times* Conor Brady contends, for journalists the Church and clergy are ‘...no longer the protected species they once were’ (Interview with Conor Brady 2010). A case study of the paternity scandal of Bishop Eamonn Casey is selected for analysis and offers a lens through which the reporting of clerical scandals in mainstream Irish media during the 1990s can be unpacked. It is argued that the coverage of this case undermined the moral authority of Irish clerics and firmly shifted the site of discussion from behind Church doors into the public sphere.

Theoretical frame

This study is framed around key theoretical concepts drawn from Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic power (1989). The central concept of *habitus* can be understood as the inherited, embodied, predisposed but also adaptable ways individuals have of reading, understanding

and interpreting the world in which they live (Bourdieu 1990). However, it is the extent to which the habitus - specifically the Irish journalistic habitus - is indeed adaptable that is of interest here in order to explain how clerical scandals were finally investigated and reported in mainstream media. Bourdieu describes symbolic power as ‘that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it’ (Bourdieu 1997: 164). Therefore, habitus is useful in order to explore the complicity but also the resistance of journalists and editors to the symbolic power of the Church. Similarly Lynch (2012) explores child abuse in the Irish industrial school system as a means to analyse patterns of dominance and subjugation, and to examine within this context ‘how such hierarchical relations are maintained or change under particular historical, social and cultural conditions’ (Lynch 2012: 55). The transformation between complicity and resistance – or dominance and subjugation – of the sacred is of central importance and the concept of habitus can be usefully adapted to this end. Thus enabling the researcher to address both structure and agency; practices which bind and alienate; and the cultivation of critical and uncritical dispositions.

The case of the Bishop Casey affair and its reporting in the Irish media reflects a transformative period in the interaction between the media and religion. In order to analyse these transformations, it is useful to adopt Bourdieu’s map of the social world in terms of social *fields*, defined as ‘a field of forces within which agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they take with respect to the field...these positions-takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field’ (Bourdieu 2005: 30). Thus media and religion can be understood as distinct social fields with inherent rules or “stakes” involved in playing the game. In order to understand the process of social change that led to the reporting of clerical scandals, Bourdieu provides a framework from which the researcher can reveal the resources and strategies that journalists and clerics employed in order to operate within these fields – either to conserve or improve their position. For Bourdieu, the position of actors within a field is dependent on the volume and structure of *capital* they possess or accumulate. Capital can take the form of economic capital (e.g. money, property) or cultural capital (e.g. educational awards, aesthetic goods, achievements). In this article, a sub-species of cultural capital will be explored; specifically media capital. However before this can be applied further, it is worth outlining the particulars of the Bishop Casey scandal.

The Bishop Casey Scandal

Bishop Casey was a well-known and well-liked figure in Irish society. He appeared regularly in the media as a spokesperson for the Church on various social justice issues, as well as topical issues relating to reproduction and the body, including for example the use of artificial contraception. However in May 1992 it emerged that Casey had fathered a child with an American woman named Annie Murphy. The affair had begun in 1973 when following a difficult divorce, 23-year old Annie Murphy travelled to Kerry to seek respite and guidance from Casey who was a family friend and at that time Bishop of Kerry. Casey and Murphy became involved in a sexual relationship which resulted in a pregnancy. Casey allegedly attempted to convince Murphy to place the child for adoption but she refused and eventually returned to the USA where she raised their son (Murphy and de Rosa 1993). Seventeen years later she decided to break the scandal to *The Irish Times*. This case represented an obvious moral hypocrisy on the part of the bishop, known as an outspoken opponent of pre/extramarital sex. In anticipation of the scandal breaking, Casey resigned from his position as Bishop of Galway and Kilmacduagh and emigrated to a parish in South America.

The study of scandals, such as the Casey affair, has been largely overlooked by sociologists to date. The events that a society construes as scandalous can act as a useful barometer of social and cultural sensibilities at any given time and place (Lull and Hinerman 1997, Adut 2005). For example, one Irish Catholic woman explains the devastating impact the news of Casey's affair had on her when the story broke in 1992, 'I can't describe to you what it did to me inside, it was like there was a hole there that could never be filled. The shock I got, personally, that day! The more I thought about it and the things that followed I can say it damaged my whole life' (Mrs Bohan 10:26 quoted in Hilliard 2003). By contrast, in 2009 Derry parishioners reportedly wept and cheered when their parish priest Fr Seán McKenna announced he was leaving his ministry to embark upon a 'loving, beautiful and life-giving relationship' with the woman he loved (Guidera 2009). In a climate of clerical child sex abuse scandals, this was perhaps one of the more positive news stories involving the Church. As a field of study, scandals have the potential to provide rich sociological insight particularly in their capacity to reflect significant or transformative events that play a role in motivating social change. Adut suggests that scandals '...can mobilize much emotional energy, at times with momentous consequences. Scandals in effect trigger a great deal of the normative solidification and transformation in society' (2005: 213).

Sex scandals in the Catholic Church are nothing new.² These scandals have been largely paedophilic in nature and have exposed the extensive sexual abuse of children and well as the institutional, statutory and cultural systems under which offending clerics were protected. While this study examines the Irish context, the sexual abuse of children by members of the Catholic clergy is certainly not unique to Ireland nor Catholicism. Child sex abuse scandals involving Roman Catholic clergy have received extensive coverage in various European countries, throughout the USA and Canada, as well as in parts of Africa, Asia and South America (Jenkins 2001, John Jay College of Criminal Justice 2004, Pew Research 2010, Conway 2014); and paedophiles have been uncovered among various religious denominations (Neustein 2009, Parkinson, Oates et al. 2014). For the most part, child sex abuse in the Irish Catholic Church came to the fore through the media from the late 1990s onwards and revealed systematic abuse within the institution. To this end, Thompson's (2000) notion of "mediated" scandals applies; scandals which do not exist independently of the media but to some extent are constituted by them. While Thompson's focus lies primarily with political scandal, the emergence of clerical child sex abuse in Ireland provides an opportunity to examine religious scandal.

Case Study Method

Why might the Bishop Eamonn Casey affair be of interest and what can sociological analysis of this case reveal? Paternity scandals from this period involving high-profile clerics such as Fr Michael Cleary and Bishop Eamonn Casey provide rich case studies from which to gain insight into the transformations in the relationship between these institutions and reveal the operation of power between journalists, editors and clergy. Analysing the emergence and reporting of these early paternity scandals is critical to understanding the subsequent emergence of child abuse scandals as it provides a better context from which to understand the veracity and intensity with which clerical scandals emerged. This single case study of a paternity scandal is used to explore the relationship between the media and the Catholic Church in Ireland in the early 1990s. The Casey story as an event in itself is not particularly significant, it is understanding this story as a social fact (Durkheim 1938) that is of importance, and moreover its role – along with later scandals - as a "moral symbol" (Alexander 2003).

This specific event of the reporting of a paternity scandal is used as a means of examining and contextualising the interaction between religion and media in Ireland. Although this

event occurred in 1992, the case study method allows the researcher to examine *contemporary* events when the ‘relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated’ (Yin 2013: 12). Indeed, a socio historical analysis of the Casey case furthers our understanding of contemporary relations between the media and the Church. Yin outlines the merits of case study research asserting, ‘the case study’s unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artefacts, interviews, and observations- beyond what might be available in a conventional historical study’ (Yin 2013: 12). This research draws from a series of semi-structured in-depth interviews with journalists and editors who collectively have reported and investigated the religious field from the 1960s to date. This is complimented by an interview with Jim Cantwell, the former Director of the Catholic Communications Office from its establishment in 1975 to 2000.³ Secondary analysis of documents incorporates newspaper archives, television and radio coverage; memoirs of journalists, and memoirs of Annie Murphy. This case study analyses a breadth of primary and secondary data to provide a “thick description” (Geertz 2001) of the case and its context.

The Journalistic Field

While media have always had an important place in Bourdieu’s analysis of culture, in the 1990s the growing commercialisation of the television sector in France focused his attention more closely on the media as a site from which to analyse and interpret social practice. In *On Television* (Bourdieu 1998) Bourdieu contends that the journalistic field provides a useful grounding for understanding the public and political spheres, asserting that ‘the journalistic field produces and imposes on the public a very particular vision of the political field, a vision that is grounded in the very structure of the journalistic field and in journalists’ specific interests produced in and by that field’ (Bourdieu 1998: 02).⁴ Since the publication of *On Television* in English, a number of scholars have done the work of applying the concepts of *journalistic habitus* (also described as the “news habitus”) and the *journalistic field* (Benson and Neveu 2005, Schultz 2007, Phelan 2008, Praça 2011, Hummel, Kirchhoff et al. 2012, Craig 2013). To a lesser extent the notion of *media capital* as a subspecies of symbolic cultural capital has been considered (Couldry 2003, Davis and Seymour 2010). This article employs the analytical concepts of journalistic habitus, media capital and the journalistic field putting them to empirical work to provide a theoretical explanation for the breaking of the Bishop Casey scandal in the Irish media.

Journalistic Habitus

Critical reflection and in-depth investigation of the Catholic Church is crucial in exposing clerical scandals. It is argued that historically a form of self-regulation has been a limiting feature of the journalistic habitus, yet these restrictions have gradually and persistently eroded since the late 1960s as the relationship between the media and the Church has transformed. In order for paternity scandals to emerge, it was essential that journalists overcame the invisible structures which constrained the practice of investigating and reporting on the private affairs of public clerics, such as Casey. This must be considered in the context of the predominantly Catholic backgrounds of those investigating and reporting on the Church. Thus it is worthwhile to consider the influence of Catholicism on the journalistic habitus. Conor Brady, editor in chief during the Casey scandal, was the first Catholic editor of *The Irish Times*. In interview, Brady describes the advantages of his Catholic upbringing and the perspective it gave him as editor of the reputedly Protestant newspaper (Horgan 2001, O' Brien 2008):

When I became editor in *The Irish Times*, there was at an editorial level, a sort of slight fear of them, of the Church. As a Catholic, because I had been born and bred into this thing, I suppose I knew them better and I didn't have that [fear] and I was quite prepared to be maybe harder on them than maybe Douglas Gageby [predecessor] would have been or maybe another editor would have been (Interview with Conor Brady 2010).⁵

In essence, Brady contends that his accumulation and embodiment of religious capital strengthened his position within the media field, stating 'because I was born and educated and reared in the Catholic tradition, I was probably a good deal less tolerant of the bishops and of the hierarchy than maybe somebody else would have been' (Interview with Conor Brady 2010). The religious capital – the institutional resources, knowledge and skills that Brady had accumulated as an Irish Catholic meant that as a journalist reporting on the religious field, he had a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu 1990). Thus Catholicism arguably shaped the cultivation of the journalistic habitus. Brady represents a generation of Irish people raised as Catholics while simultaneously exposed to an increasingly modernising society, who were beginning to privately and publicly question the Church's teachings on how they should live their life, particularly in relation to social values. The current religious affairs correspondent with *The Irish Times*, Patsy McGarry is of a similar mindset:

I come from a generation that would not be as easily intimidated by a bishop as those who have been before me, or even a primate. Certainly at this stage, I'm so familiar with them all but I certainly wouldn't be intimidated by them (Interview with Patsy McGarry 2010).

In relation to breaking the Casey scandal, Brady suggests that his unique position as a Catholic legitimised his position and actions as an editor, remarking 'I mean I often wonder about the Casey thing, would *The Irish Times* have published it under an editor who was not a Roman Catholic?' (Interview with Conor Brady 2010). This raises a question about the extent to which the appetite for change among journalists and editors, like Brady, towards reporting more critically on the Church reflects the public interest. While there is a paucity of research on the values and beliefs of Irish journalists, Corcoran's (2004) study offers a rare insight. In her survey of the political preferences and values of Irish journalists in 1997, she found that 43 per cent of journalists reported a distance between their own views - which Corcoran finds to be predominantly more liberal - than the views of the audiences they serve (2004-35). While it does not seem pertinent to posthumously speculate about the public interest in the early 1990s, it is worth noting that trust in the Catholic Church – and more broadly institutional religiosity – was declining throughout this period (Donnelly and Inglis 2010).

However, closer examination of the content of *The Irish Times* article which broke the Bishop Casey scandal suggests an unexpected ambiguity and evasiveness around reporting the facts of this story. The headline simply reads, 'Dr Casey Resigns as Bishop of Galway' (Pollak and O' Clery 1992). Despite collecting a large body of evidence relating to the paternity scandal, the report focuses on the *resignation* of Casey rather than the affair. It is only in the seventh paragraph that payments connected to "a woman in Connecticut" are mentioned. Yet her involvement and any insinuation regarding an affair is extremely vague. The article reads:

The bishop, normally one of the most outspoken and visible members of the Hierarchy, has been keeping a noticeably low profile recently. Earlier this week *The Irish Times* made unsuccessful efforts to set up an interview with him, having heard reports of his possible resignation, in order to discuss matters which might have a bearing on the reasons for his decision. One of these included payments amounting to \$115,000 to a woman in Connecticut and a lawyer in New York on July 25th 1990 and

other regular payments to the woman over a period of 15 years since the mid-1970s (Pollak and O' Clery 1992).

There is an obvious ambiguity in the reporting of this scandal as the tragic but unnamed “matters” surrounding his resignation are hinted at but never clearly identified. Surprisingly, at no point in this edition of *The Irish Times* is the paternity scandal of Bishop Eamonn Casey explicitly stated, yet it is regarded as the issue which broke the affair. Reference to an affair is never mentioned or discussed. Casey’s son Peter is not mentioned or named. Indeed, the word ‘child’ or any explicit reference to paternity does not appear at any point in the coverage. The scandal is vaguely implied. Analysis of the initial coverage of this scandal suggests that it began as scandal surrounding Bishop Casey’s resignation in relation to the misuse of diocesan funds. However, in the days that followed it became apparent these funds concerned the maintenance costs of a child resulting from his affair with Annie Murphy.

The hesitation in reporting this scandal arguably reflects a degree of constraint engrained in the journalistic habitus – albeit semiconsciously and self-imposed. Despite the provision of video evidence, maintenance checks and numerous other documents (Murphy and de Rosa 1993, Brady 2005, O' Brien 2008), a team of experienced journalists at *The Irish Times* spent a lengthy period of three months investigating the case before daring to publish the allegations. Covering this terrain was a significant transgression of traditional journalistic boundaries and some refused to investigate the private life of Casey (Brady 2005, Interview with Conor Brady 2010). Brady was initially suspicious of the tip-off as falsely planted information which if printed could result in reputational and financial damages, as well as validate the supposed anti-Catholic agenda of *The Irish Times* (Brady 2005, Interview with Conor Brady 2010). There were also litigious reasons for a prolonged investigation, such as a potential libel suit by Casey or the Church. When Brady consulted an expert in canon law he was warned , ‘If you’re wrong...the Church will destroy *The Irish Times*’ (Brady 2005: 146). This suggests not only the symbolic capital of the Church but also their substantial economic capital, as they were in a much stronger position to pursue legal action. In the course of their research the investigative team at *The Irish Times* learned that a large payment of \$150,000 USD made by Casey to Murphy had come from diocesan funds. Casey agreed to meet with reporters from *The Irish Times* to discuss these payments but failed to show up on the day. Instead he travelled to the Vatican and tendered his resignation in order ‘to get out before the media descended on [him]’ (McGarry 2007). Two days later his resignation was officially

announced by the Catholic Communications Office and it was only at this point that *The Irish Times* finally decided to print the facts of the story that they knew they could stand over (O'Brien 2008: 244-5). However the reticence to report the story did not go unnoticed. As former *Irish Times* journalist Alison O'Connor recalls, '...there was an element of ridicule for how long [*The Irish Times*] had waited and sat on the Casey story' (Interview with Alison O'Connor 2010).

The reporting of the scandal is rather indirect. Arguably, readers would have required insider knowledge in order to interpret the story as a scandal. For example, the editorial featured in this issue speaks to only those few who are privy to specific gossip. It reports that the resignation '...brings to a head an issue which has been current in Church circles for some time past. The news will come as no surprise to many senior Churchmen, or indeed, to many of Dr Casey's own flock' (Brady 1992). It continues stating that 'absence of clarification can only fan the fires of speculation' (Brady 1992). Readers are not informed of the "issue" or "news" which been current in Church circles; or why Casey's resignation would come as "no surprise" to his colleagues and parishioners; or indeed what the current "speculation" is regarding his resignation. However, in retrospect it is clear that the insinuation in *The Irish Times* editorial is that Casey's affair was rumoured among parishioners and Casey's colleagues (Brady 1992). This corresponds with Thompson's (2000) analysis of the evolution of rumours to scandal. He explains:

A scandal is often preceded by gossip and rumour; initially this may be restricted to people who are close to the individuals involved in the transgression, and strenuous efforts may be made to prevent the rumours from spreading. If the rumours are picked up by the media and conveyed either in the form of unconfirmed reports or innuendos, then it becomes much more difficult to prevent a scandal from breaking out (Thompson 2000: 28).

But to what extent were journalist's privy to rumour and gossip within Church circles? Despite the passing of 17 years and the alleged presence of rumours in the community, it appears that no journalist ever investigated and reported on the Casey affair. Instead it was Annie Murphy who pro-actively took the role of whistle-blower by choosing to inform *The Irish Times*. Although the emergence of the Casey scandal represents a pivotal shift towards challenging the moral authority of clerical figures in Irish society, analysis of the scandal in

The Irish Times suggest some reticence in doing so. This cautiousness raises the notion of strategies of self-censorship or self-regulation amongst Irish journalists reporting on the religious field. Following Bourdieu, the journalistic habitus – and the structures which shape it – can be a useful conceptual tool in analysing these practice of journalists.

The relaxation of formal censorship from the 1970s onwards (Rockett 2004) offers some understanding of the development of a more critical disposition among journalists reporting on the religious field. However evidence of informal censorship and self-regulation within journalistic practice helps to explain the relatively slow reporting of clerical scandals and the persistence of latent restraints on journalistic practice. *Irish Independent* journalists Gene Kerrigan and Lise Hand suggest the poor likelihood of getting clerical sex scandals into print, like that of Casey's, contributed to a culture of self-censorship amongst journalists, explaining:

Fear of the libel laws, and just plain squeamishness, works to suppress matters connected with sex. Stories of this or that scandal, that one bishop or another is a “leg-over man,” are not uncommon. They are dismissed as gossip by journalists who know that the chances of confirming them and getting them into print are minuscule (Kerrigan and Hand 1992).

The Irish Times alluded to the Casey-Murphy affair as a badly kept secret but it was not until 1992 when Annie Murphy volunteered the information that this story finally broke. Yet it is highly unlikely that this was the first instance of a cleric who engaged in a sexual relationship. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that clerical scandals were taboo territory for the Irish media. Kerrigan and Hand (1992) report that many years before the Casey affair broke [circa 1983] a reporter from political magazine *Magill* allegedly encountered a well-known Dublin priest and Northern politician carousing with two women in the back room of a restaurant. In an article for the magazine, he mentioned this incident in passing without naming any of the individuals concerned. The magazine was abruptly stopped at the presses and the offending content removed (Kerrigan and Hand 1992). Indeed, early in his career journalist Michael Finlan encountered two victims of institutional clerical abuse agreeing to tell their story, however Finlan's editor, Bill Redmond, did not allow the story to be pursued. McGarry explains that Redmond's refusal to investigate these claims reflected a degree of deference towards the Church who had patronized his education

(Interview with Patsy McGarry 2010). Indeed, even the satirisation of Bishop Casey exposed strict boundaries between the sacred and profane. When the Casey scandal broke, regular cartoonist with *The Irish Times* Martyn Turner depicted the bishop with a caption, “Forgive me sinners, for I have fathered”. This satirisation of the popular cleric was deemed impermissible and rejected for publication. Turner was informed that ‘it would have to be a very good cartoon indeed for [him] to get any comment about Bishop Casey into the paper’ (Turner 2004: 02 quoted in O’Brien, 2008). More recently, one of Turner’s cartoons satirising the Church’s non-compliance with mandatory reporting of child abuse was quickly removed from the website of *The Irish Times* and an apology published (O’Sullivan 2014, TheJournal.ie 2014). Despite these hesitations, ultimately the reporting of the Bishop Casey scandal represented a direct challenge by the media to the moral and symbolic authority of the hierarchy. The reporting of this paternity scandal made visible a transformation in how journalists were investigating and reporting on the Church.

The Clergy and Media Capital

The Casey scandal provides an opportunity to explore a sub-species of cultural capital in the form of *media capital*. In order to understand the symbolic power of Casey in Irish society, and therefore the relative weight of this scandal, it is useful to consider Casey’s position in the media field. Casey had a persona that lent itself to public life and he was well liked. As one journalist remarks ‘He was an expert performer, a man with a genius for understanding the power of the camera and shrewdly able to reach through it to people’s living rooms’ (Doyle 2006: 297-8). Casey became a well-known face – a celebrity - through regular appearances in national media, often acting as spokesman for the hierarchy. Writer Mary Leland, remarked that Bishop Casey’s ‘...warm vowel sounds are amongst the most recognisable on radio and television...’ (Leland 1975). In his memoirs television critic John Doyle recalls Casey as ‘...a grinning roly-poly man, [who] had a reputation as a people’s bishop. He’d been on *The Late Late Show* several times, singing songs, telling jokes and being a loveable countryman, steeped in the down-to-earth wit of the west of Ireland’ (Doyle 2006: 297-8). There was great public fondness for Casey and editor Conor Brady suggests that Irish audiences were comfortable with Casey as a public figure, ‘An awful lot of middle-ground, middle-aged, middle-thinking Catholic people could relate to Eamonn Casey as the kind of fellow you would meet at the golf club or at the GAA club or at Sunday mass...I think Irish people felt comfortable with Casey’ (Interview with Conor Brady 2010).

In his public appearances, Casey was outspoken on social justice issues where he was regarded as quite radical. When it came to Church teaching he was known as a bedrock conservative yet gentler in putting across his message than some of the more hard-line conservatives in the hierarchy. As one of his former priests put it, ‘He applies the laws and teachings of the Church in the same sensitive and considerate way that a Garda sergeant in a country village has to do’ (Finlan 1989). In the wake of Vatican II, Casey formed part of a new generation of Irish clerics who understood the need to embrace rather than censor media and recognised it as a powerful resource with increasing prevalence in Irish homes. Around the birth of Irish television in the 1960s, Archbishop John Charles McQuaid anticipated the impact of this new medium on Irish Catholic audiences and responded by sending priests for media training so that they could produce and broadcast domestic content, such as the long-running documentary series *Radharc* (Dunn 1986, Cooney 1999, Mc Ateer 2014). By the early 1970s, the vast majority of urban and rural households in Ireland had access to television (Mc Loone 1984). Clerics, like Casey, began to step out from behind the pulpit to provide opinion and analysis on various aspects of Irish social life. Through the media, Irish audiences could inform themselves on how to live a good life according to the Church.

In some instances clerics provided popular entertainment for young Irish Catholics, such as the *All-Priests Show* (existing to this day in such guises as chart-topping group *The Singing Priests*). One of the most notable examples in this regard was Fr Michael Cleary who became known as “the singing priest”. Cleary was particularly prominent in the media. He was a regular guest on *The Late Late Show* throughout the 1970s and 80s discussing contraception, marriage and pre/extra-marital sex. He hosted a television chat show and had a long-running talk radio show on Dublin’s 98FM. When interviewed for the 1967 documentary film *Rocky Road to Dublin*, Cleary explains:

I believe that my particular talent lies in talking my head off, cracking a joke or singing a song and well this is what God gave me to work with and this is what I’ve got to work with. And I find that in general it does get me across to the particular section of the community that I aim particularly at; the younger folk and the people of that age group, who look for in their priest, this camaraderie and this ability to sort of understand their forms of entertainment, their likes and dislikes, one who might say, seems to be on their wavelength (Cleary quoted in Lennon 1968).

Cleary understood the cultural tastes and lifestyles of young Irish people. He was on their wavelength. There was a sexuality, comradeship and glamour around this very contemporary of priests who prominently displayed the virtues of a post-Vatican II cleric. As domestic television programming grew, clerics like Casey and Cleary, were able to cultivate and accumulate media capital. Their ability to harness radio and television in particular meant that these clerics were some of the most well-known and popular figures in Ireland. However, it could be argued that greater intimacy with the Irish public through the media, threatened the moral authority of figures like Cleary and Casey. Thompson (2000) explores how the development of new media communications, such as television, gave rise to an increasingly intimate form of self-presentation and promoted a “society of self-disclosure”. He describes the effect for political leaders who could present themselves ‘not just as leaders but as human beings, as ordinary individuals who could address their subjects as fellow citizens’ (Thompson 2000: 40), but in turn the aura of “greatness” that surrounded political leaders and institutions was lost; ‘an aura which was sustained in part by the aloofness of leaders and the distance they maintained from the individuals over whom they ruled’ (Thompson 2000: 40). This could easily be applied to the case of Casey or Cleary. While the media provided them with unfettered access to Irish Catholic audiences and acted as a platform for their personas, it also transformed them into “one of us” – just as fallible and morally reprehensible.

However within the media field, the reverence for Casey persisted. Following the report of his resignation, *The Irish Times* described Casey as the ‘Embodiment of Catholicism’s human face’ (Pollak 1992) and featured a series of articles emphasising the moral virtues of Casey describing him as a ‘a plain man of the people’, ‘...a warm hearted Christian’, noting that his ‘Friday meal money always went to [charity] Trócaire’ and referring to his resignation as ‘...a great human tragedy’ (Finlan 1992, Foley 1992, *The Irish Times* 1992a, *The Irish Times* 1992b). Daily tabloid newspaper, *The Star* celebrated the personal virtues of Casey and his contribution as a bishop, referring to him as ‘an outspoken man of immense charm’, a ‘champion of his flock’, claiming that the ‘deprived were always his real concern’ and that ‘his life [was] spent helping others’ (Lundberg 1992, Molony 1992, Smyth 1992, *The Star* 1992). Arguably Casey held an enduring symbolic authority within the media field. For example, when he agreed to give an exclusive interview to the *Sunday Tribune* in November 1993 he selected the interviewer, journalist Veronica Guerin, and was given an opportunity to approve the articles before they went to print (McGarry 2007, Interview with Patsy McGarry 2010).⁶ Although there are ethical concerns in allowing copy approval, McGarry explains, ‘I

have difficulty with it but I can well see why Veronica went for it' adding 'in the context of 1993 if I was presented with it, I probably would have got on my knees to [my editor] and said "Please...let him have editorial control! We must get the story"' (Interview with Patsy McGarry 2010). Journalist Alison O' Connor agrees:

If I was Vincent Browne [Guerin's editor] and I had the opportunity of getting the interview with Casey or not and it was only under those guidelines or stipulations, I'd have gone with it and if you're making it clear to your readership that this is the interview you have...that this is how it was acquired, I think it's fair enough. You weren't going to get him otherwise (Interview with Alison O' Connor 2010).

Yet this extended beyond the period of the early 1990s. In 2006, more than a decade after the scandal broke, Casey carried out an interview with a local historian in County Kerry where he was given editorial control over the broadcast which was later transmitted on RTÉ Radio (McGarry 2007, Interview with Patsy McGarry 2010). This may point to the enduring symbolic authority of Casey and the long-lasting, durable nature of media capital, enabling him to successfully negotiate the media field.

The Religious Field

The symbolic authority of figures such as Casey is best understood by examining the religious field. The religious field is constituted by various institutional players, which might include a range of denominational churches and sects, religious movements and so forth. However in Ireland the religious field has traditionally been monopolised by the Catholic Church and there has been little choice in the religious marketplace (Inglis 1998, Bruce 1999). It is therefore an important social space in Irish culture and as Inglis asserts 'any analysis of the power and autonomy of the religious field has to focus on the power and autonomy of the Catholic Church' (Inglis 2003: 57). Traditionally, the Church has played a pivotal role in structuring the way in which Irish people see and understand the world spiritually and morally. However the media, and particularly the introduction of State television, represented a challenge to this by offering an alternative perspective on social, religious and moral issues. Therefore analysis of transformations in the religious field in Ireland must also consider interference from non-religious players such as the State and - as is the focus of this study - the media.

In order to understand the religious field, it is important to examine how religious capital is used as a resource to attain position within the field. Within Irish society, religious capital is accumulated through the successful embodiment of the Catholic habitus. In other words, “being” a good Catholic. Bourdieu identified three forms of capital; embodied, objectified and institutionalised. Following Bourdieu, Inglis (1998, 2003) applies these forms of capital to the Irish context, explaining that (i) embodied religious capital is produced from living one’s life as a good Catholic, through spiritual and moral self-improvement (e.g. praying, going to Mass, practicing self-denial, humility, modest and chastity); (ii) objectified cultural religious capital mainly exists in terms of religious artefacts and iconography and extends to the accumulation of books, paintings, clothes and so forth; and finally (iii) institutionalised Catholic religious capital is understood as formal awards or blessing given by the Church, from baptism, first holy communion, confirmation to holy orders, beatification and canonisation. Having dominated the religious field in Ireland throughout the twentieth century, the Catholic Church was able to develop a monopoly over most of the religious capital that was available. For Inglis, accumulation of this form of cultural capital was an important part of ‘attaining high positions in the religious field, but it could be used to attain other forms of capital and, thereby, high positions in other social fields’ (Inglis 2003: 44). In other words, religious capital was transposable in Catholic Ireland as a form of social capital. However, the Catholic Church’s monopoly over the religious field operated as a form of symbolic violence by defining and limiting what was and was not religious, spiritual and moral (Inglis 1998). The dominant position of the Church meant that it was able to define what was orthodoxy and what was heresy (Swartz 1997). By reporting clerical sex scandals, the media challenged orthodoxy and in particular, the Church’s legitimacy to define and shape morality. The symbolic authority of the Catholic Church in the religious field was undermined and a struggle emerged between the Church and media to define what was religious, spiritual and moral within Irish society.

Journalists and Religious Capital

The development of specialist religious affairs correspondents during the 1960s represented an opportunity for Irish Catholic journalists to use their *religious capital* to enable them to access, negotiate and report on the religious field. As McGarry explains, ‘[specialist journalists] just know where to go, where to access knowledge and who to speak to’ (Interview with Patsy McGarry 2010). Specialised knowledge of the Roman Catholic Church allowed journalists to engage in the religious field as never before. The process of developing

specialist religious affairs correspondents began in the 1960s following the proceedings of the Second Vatican council from 1962 to 1965 and the synods that followed (circa 1967 – 1971). This was a significant turning point in the Church's monopolisation of social and moral discourse. However, these proceedings provided a rare occasion to produce analysis and public debate surrounding moral and liturgical issues and consequently piqued the interest of journalists and editors. It was the beginning of more open debate on the role of the Catholic Church in modern society and indeed communications policies were being addressed and revised (Cooney 1974). Increasingly national media outlets had the resources to send reporters directly to Rome. As a result Irish reporters became less dependent on sources within the Irish Church as they built contacts internationally. The Vatican council meetings provided journalists with a plurality of perspectives about the Church and its affairs. However according to former director of the Catholic Communications Office, Jim Cantwell, the Church was very suspicious of journalists (Interview with Jim Cantwell 2010), and it was only those journalists with the appropriate forms of religious capital. According to Cantwell, these were journalists such as Seán Mac Réamoinn, Louis McRedmond, Desmond Fisher and John Horgan '...who were very articulate, well-informed, interested, balanced' and produced journalism that was '...probably the best in the English-speaking world' (Interview with Jim Cantwell 2010). These journalists had appropriate forms of cultural and economic capital and had cultivated dispositions which legitimised their position within the religious field, enabling them to successfully negotiate it.

As a young correspondent with *The Irish Times*, John Horgan remembers this formative period in his career as an exciting time:

It was the astonishing experience of Rome in 1965 which really helped me and anybody else who experienced it...to look at the Church in which we'd been brought up – in a fairly conservative and fairly orthodox and fairly unexciting kind of way – as a place where all sorts of exciting things were happening and were going to go on happening and a place in which...you could be irreverent, you could meet bishops, priests, theologians, monks, brothers and nuns...as intellectual equals and argue the toss with them, and sometimes be more than a little irreverent (Interview with John Horgan 2010).

This period marked a shift in the relationship between journalist and cleric and provided an opportunity for greater dialogue. Arguably this experience critically shaped the journalistic habitus of religious affairs correspondents. It set a new standard and (re)constructed norms around religious affairs journalism. Indeed Horgan, who went on to become a highly noted journalist, academic, senator and Press Ombudsman, adds that ‘the experience of those three months really shaped me forever afterwards’ (Interview with John Horgan 2010). Indeed, a number of these Vatican II journalists were inspired to publish books on the period (Mc Redmond 1966, Fisher 1986, Mac Réamoinn 1987). Horgan’s successor at *The Irish Times*, John Cooney describes the public and professional admiration for these specialist correspondents alluding to their authoritative position not only in the media field but beyond it. He describes them as ‘a brilliant group of journalists, who weren’t just religious affairs correspondents; they were central figures in Irish public life and in Irish journalism [with] a big interest, an erudition, knowledge and commitment to Vatican II’ (Interview with John Cooney 2010). However, there were still battles to be fought as authoritative forces within the Church were not always eager to embrace a more modern and liberal Church. As Cooney contends, despite the purported reputation of these journalists ‘...even they were not being listened to by the hierarchy’ (Interview with John Cooney 2010). He argues although these journalists created an excitement around proposed changes to liberalise the Church following the Council, when these changes did not come to pass or blockages were encountered, journalists became frustrated and by the mid-1970s this tension began to surface. It was at this point that the Catholic Press and Information Office was established. In 1975, John Cooney remarked on this development stating that he hoped the appointment of a dedicated press officer would ‘...result in an improvement in direct personal relations between journalists and bishops’ explaining that:

In recent years there had been tension between religious affairs correspondents and Churchmen in various countries. This tension had been particularly acute in Ireland, with the arrival of television, with rapid social change, with the Second Vatican Council and the ecumenical movement – all of which had contributed to a re-examination of the role of religion in society (Cooney 1975).

Tensions grew between Church and media and in 1985, interested parties from journalism and the Church banded together to form the *Religion-Media Forum* aiming to provide an opportunity for individuals from the Church to put forward their views to the press, and to

facilitate an informal exchange of opinions.⁷ It was a contentious time as Irish society began to tackle emerging cultural debates in western society. Social and moral issues, hitherto taboo subjects, entered the media agenda and Church leaders were publicly challenged on matters relating to divorce, abortion, contraception, feminism, and homosexuality (Kenny 1997, Girvin 2008, Ferriter 2009).

Since Vatican II, a more egalitarian relationship emerged between religious correspondents and the hierarchy whereby journalists had accumulated specialised knowledge and were becoming increasingly capable and confident when engaging in discussions on theology and doctrine. There is a question mark however over the level of deference paid by some journalists to the hierarchy. Patsy McGarry suggests this contact with clergy compromised journalistic autonomy:

The relationship between the media and the establishment was far too close here in Ireland...and that applied to the Church as well. And forgive me for saying it, it applied to some of my predecessors as well in that they were too enamoured by their contact with senior clergy in particular (Interview with Patsy McGarry 2010).

This is echoed in the comments of Matt Cooper, former editor of *The Sunday Tribune* who remarked in 1997, that the Church had ‘got it soft for too long – its comments and statements were reported but not analysed or commented upon’ (Cooper 1997: 43). It was not until the emergence of clerical sex abuse scandals in the 1990s that journalists (specialists and non-specialists alike) were encouraged to proactively investigate the religious field. Consequently, this forced the Church into explaining and justifying its morally authoritative position in Irish society. This may also reflect a shift in public values and greater public appetite for these stories. It is therefore useful at this point to explore the Irish Catholic habitus.

The Whistle-blower and the Irish Catholic habitus

The religious habitus is a way of reading, understanding and interpreting the world from within the religious field. The religious habitus encompasses everything from the individual’s knowledge of religious teaching, their participation in religious rites and rituals, to the way they speak, the gestures they make, and the postures they assume. It is not a natural disposition rather it is a socially constructed way of being into which the individual is

socialised (Rey 2007). The *Irish Catholic habitus* provides a useful conceptual frame for understanding the position of Annie Murphy, the woman at the centre of the Bishop Casey scandal. At the time of the scandal, *Irish Independent* journalists Gene Kerrigan and Lise Hand commented that, 'If Annie Murphy was Irish and was still living in Inch [rural village in County Kerry] we might never have heard of her' (Kerrigan and Hand 1992). Indeed as a divorced, single-mother and lapsed Catholic who was born and raised in America, to some extent Annie Murphy represented heterodoxy – or indeed heresy. She challenged the conservative and outmoded Catholic construction of women as demure, pious, sexually repressed, humble beings, who were obedient to men, and in particular priests (Condren 1989). The day following the publication of the Casey scandal in *The Irish Times*, any ambiguity around the nature of the scandal was clarified by Murphy in a radio interview on RTÉ Radio 1. In this interview, she provided colour to the story revealing details of her romance with Casey. She described it as '...the most magical thing I'd ever encountered in my life. It was out of this world...It was like I was on gossamer wings' but explained that she 'never intended to let him get away with it...' (Byrne, Hanley et al. 1992). After recording the interview, news editor Donal Byrne reflected that:

[He and his colleague] looked at the spools on the recording machine as a bomb disposal team might regard a suspicious parcel. After the programme, a friend called to say he had had to pull in on the Stillorgan dual carriageway to listen. His, he told me, was one of about twenty cars whose occupants were doing the same thing. Wherever we were on that morning, all of us seemed to realise that neither Ireland nor its Catholic Church would ever be the same again (Byrne 2009).

Reporting frank details about the sexual conduct of a bishop was a giant leap for Irish audiences and journalists alike. As Byrne states in relation to the Annie Murphy interview 'Generally, the radio interviewer is more comfortable than the interviewee. Not in this case' (Byrne 2009). This was new terrain for Irish journalists. This was a significant case that captured public attention, not only because of the salacious details but because it represented an act of lifting the sacred veil traditionally shielded the Catholic Church from investigation. It did so by challenging both the individual and institution that held a moral authority over the religious field. This scandal also prompted wider debates concerning the relevance of celibacy and the treatment of women, especially unmarried mothers by the Catholic Church. However, Annie Murphy was arguably demonised by the public and factions of the Irish

media as her motivations for coming forward were highly scrutinised. Soon after the story broke, a *Sunday Independent* poll conducted by Lansdowne Market Research found 39 per cent of respondents reported to have more sympathy for Bishop Casey than for Annie and Peter Murphy, and 65 per cent reported that they believed the affair had undermined the position of parents in giving guidance to their children on moral and social matters (Mac Cormaic 1992). A mood of disdain was reflected by *The Late Late Show* host Gay Byrne when interviewing Murphy on the affair in April 1993 (*The Star* 1993). *The Irish Times* reported that the host had described Murphy's behaviour as "coquettish" and ended the interview by commenting that her son wouldn't be doing too badly if he turned out to be "half the man his father was" to which Murphy replied "I'm not so bad myself, Mr Byrne", quickly walking out of the studio (*The Irish Times* 1993). It was later reported that one in three people in Ireland tuned in to watch 'the TV row' (Flynn 1993).

Murphy's book *Forbidden Fruit* (1993), provided graphic detail of the affair, including descriptions of their sexual encounters: 'There stood the Bishop, my love, without clerical collar or crucifix or ring, without covering of any kind. The great showman had unwrapped himself. Christmas of all Christmases' (Murphy and de Rosa 1993: 46). Her intimate portrayal of Casey undermined the reverence and authority of the bishop and the affair became a source of titillation. In addition to salacious coverage, depictions of Annie Murphy were highly sexualised. This potentially represent a source of great shame (Condren 1989). However Murphy's involvement with such a salacious scandal also had the ability to generate a degree of erotic capital (Hakim 2011). Despite the public's apparent lack of empathy for Murphy and the fact that the affair occurred 17 years previously, she nonetheless became a sex symbol in Ireland. Ten days after the story broke, it was reported that blow-up dolls were being fashioned and sold in Annie Murphy's image (*Sunday World* 1992). Bizarrely, in 1994 she was voted the sexiest woman in Ireland (Ryan 1994). Annie Murphy's story fortuitously emerged as a new breed of Irish journalists and editors contemplated the value of continued deference to the hierarchy. This turning point occurred in May 1992 when the Casey affair finally broke 17 years after it began.

Conclusions

Why did clerical scandals break in the Irish media when they did? This article approaches the question by asking why they did not break earlier. I propose that in order to explain the emergence of the reporting of clerical child sex abuse, this phenomenon must be understood

within a broader socio historical context. I argue that the reporting of clerical scandals reflects a long term shift in the relationship between the media and the Catholic Church in Ireland. This article traces the development of the journalistic habitus in Ireland over the latter half of the twentieth century and describes the cultivation of an increasingly critical disposition leading to greater reflection on the position of the Church and clergy in Irish social life. It contends that the symbolic domination of the Church has weakened over time and points to the media as an increasingly powerful player in the religious field. It is argued that analysing the emergence and reporting of paternity scandals is critical to understanding the scale and intensity with which clerical child sex abuse scandals emerged. The Bishop Casey affair was a watershed case and this scandal is arguably the first instance in which a long term shift in the balance of power between the media and the Church was made visible. The reporting of this scandal illustrates an underlying erosion of the moral authority of the Catholic hierarchy within Irish society. It demonstrates a significant normative transgression for Irish journalism, observable in the restrained reporting of the story in *The Irish Times*. While the Casey affair was the source of great scandal at the time, it is treated as rather benign in retrospect given the comparatively heinous child abuse scandals which have emerged since then. Indeed in 2002, 74 per cent of respondents from Casey's former diocese reported they were in favour of his return despite the scandal (Mc Donald 2002)⁸ and in 2006 former bishop was welcomed home. However this case should not be overlooked or underestimated. The unravelling of the moral authority of Bishop Casey - evident in this paternity scandal as well as the other instances of clerical scandals which followed in quick succession throughout the 1990s and 2000s - offers rich sociological insight into the context under which reports of clerical child abuse break in the media.

Examining the socio historical relationship between the Church and media is a conceptually muddy task. In the context of a broader process of secularisation, it is impossible to disentangle the nature and direction of a causal relationship between the emergence of clerical scandals in the 1990s and declining religiosity. Bourdieu's theoretical model has provided a useful conceptual map and offered an interpretative framework from which to analyse the media field and the religious field independently as well as to explore the interaction between these fields. However there are limitations to his theory particularly in the rigour of its application and as a means to understand social change (DiMaggio 1979, Swartz 1981, Lamont and Lareau 1988, Goldthorpe 2007). As Lamont and Lareau (1988)

contend, Bourdieu's failure to explicitly state his concepts makes systematic comparison and assessment difficult. By applying the concepts of habitus, capital and field, this article attempts to more clearly define and understand these terms. Furthermore, the approach developed here offers a useful comparative framework for explaining the emergence of scandals in other contexts. Another critique of Bourdieu's model is that it overlooks agency (Parker 1996, Dillon 2001). While the concept of habitus developed here addresses individual action, this article is primarily concerned with analysing structural relations between the Church and media. Further analysis is required to explore how, following the emergence of clerical scandals, Irish Catholics construct meaning in their everyday practices. Nonetheless, the Bishop Casey scandal represents an important site of analysis. By making transformations between the media and the Church more visible we can better understand processes of social and cultural change.

Notes

¹ The author gratefully acknowledges the contribution of the journal reviewers and editor whose comments and suggestions greatly helped to develop this paper.

² The first pope Saint Peter, was believed to have been married and the bible refers to his mother-in-law (Matthew 8:15). Pope Pius II (1458–1464), Pope Innocent VIII (1484–1492), Pope Alexander VI (1492–1503) and Pope Pius IV (1559–1565) are all believed to have fathered children. During a period known as the Rule of the Harlots (904–963), Pope Sergius III (A.D. 904–911) reportedly took a mistress, who along with her mother and sister ‘filled the Papal chair with their paramours and bastard sons, and turned the Papal Palace into a den of robbers’. The grandson of this mistress became Pope John XII (955–963) and was allegedly ‘guilty of almost every crime; violated virgins and widows, high and low; lived with his father’s mistress; made the Papal Palace a brothel; [and] was killed while in the act of adultery by the woman’s enraged husband’. The 15th Century saw further Popes involved in scandal. For example, Pope John XXIII (1410–1415) was described as: ‘... the most depraved criminal who ever sat on the Papal Throne’, ‘...as cardinal in Bologna, 200 maidens, nuns and married women fell victim to his amours; as Pope he violated virgins and nuns; lived in adultery with his brother’s wife; was guilty of sodomy and other nameless vices... [and] sold Cardinalates to children of wealthy families’. See: Halley, H. H. 1965. *Halley’s Bible Handbook: an Abbreviated Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, [MI]: Zondervan.

³ Interviews presented in this article are drawn from a wider PhD study on clerical scandals in the Irish Catholic Church funded from 2008 to 2011 by the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences. As part of the fieldwork, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the following journalists who actively reported on the religious field and/or clerical scandals: these included religious affairs correspondents with *The Irish Times*, John Horgan (circa 1963–1976), Andy Pollak (1981 to 1996), Patsy McGarry (1994– current); Conor Brady (reporter for *The Irish Times* from 1969 and editor from 1986–2002); John Cooney (actively reporting in the area from 1970– current) and Alison O’Connor (actively reporting in this area from 1994 – current); Interviews were also conducted with relevant directors of the Catholic Communications Office, Jim Cantwell (director from 1975–2000) and Martin Long (director from 2003– current). See: Donnelly, S. 2012. ‘The Media and the Catholic Church in Ireland: Clerical sex scandals and shifts in the balance of power’, Phd Thesis: University College Dublin.

⁴ Though much criticised for its polemic tone, *On Television* is Bourdieu’s closest attempt to analyse the media and it is an important work in his canon marking a shift in his attention from the consumption to the production of news. It is perhaps best understood as an introduction and provocation for scholars interested in developing an applied model of Bourdieu’s central concepts to the media, see: Benson, R. and E. Neveu 2005. *Bourdieu and the journalistic field*. Cambridge: Polity.

⁵ Douglas Gageby edited *The Irish Times* from 1963–1986 and was succeeded by Conor Brady from 1986 – 2002.

⁶ The desire among journalists to secure an interview with Casey was highlighted by the *Sunday Independent* in April 1993. Prior to the *Sunday Tribune*’s scoop, the *Sunday Independent* reported a “world exclusive” interview with Casey by writer Gordon Thomas who claimed to have tracked the bishop down to a small village in South America. A radio advertisement featuring Casey’s voice was broadcast to promote the exclusive interview. However, it transpired that the interview (and advert) were bogus, see: Fanning, A. 1993. ‘An Error of Judgement’, *Sunday Independent*, 25 Apr 1993: 14.

⁷ Founding members included religious affairs journalists Seán Mac Réamoinn, T.P. O’Mahony, Joseph Power and John Cooney as well as press officers from the Catholic, Presbyterian and Anglican Churches, and religious orders.

⁸ It was reported that respondents to this MRBI / TG4 poll listed the most serious element of the Casey controversy as his use of Church funds (37 per cent), followed by the treatment of his son (15 per cent) and lastly, the secrecy of his relationship with Annie Murphy (13 per cent), see: Mc Donald, B. 2002. ‘74pc favour return of Bishop Casey despite scandal’, *Irish Independent*, 7 Nov 2002.

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